THE PACIFIC

Commercial Advertiser

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Gold Works Wonders.

Richard of spendthrifts was the chief,
There ne'er was such another;
A barrister without a brief,
No money, and no pother.
'Twas hard that he, so gay and free,
Should have an elder brother.

He paid no tailor for his coat,
His duty was to wear one.
He often lacked a five-pound note,
But ne'er a friend to share one.
In bliss, his voice exclaimed, "Rejoice;"
If sorrow, "Grin and bear it."

His purse was empty, yet he spent
As though his path were sunny;
Borrowed at twenty-five per cent.,
And gave away the money.
(A fellow-drone could always own
A little of the honey.)

Luck turned at last, the brother died,
For Death will not spare any,
And Dick, the lord of acres wide,
I dare not say how many—
Inherited, the gossips said,
A very pretty penny.

His friends are now left in the lurch
His manner's dry and chilling.
He'll give a hundred to a church,
A neighbor not a shilling:
But, as they go, he'll mumble low,
"*Unable*, not unwilling."

Write him a tale of woe, his eye
Turns upward in the socket,
And then he lays your letter,
With date and careful docket.
Call, and I doubt you'll find him out
Of temper, town, or pocket.

Can gold work wonders? Yes, it can;
The cruel exorciser
Has changed an honest, thriftless man
Into a grasping miser;
Less foolish, true, than him we knew,
But not a whit the wiser. —*Selected.*

[For the Pacific Commercial Advertiser.]

The Inspector General of Schools Reviewed.

MR. EDITOR:—It is now nearly three years since the present Board of Education was organized and entered upon the discharge of its public functions. The Inspector General of schools thinks it therefore a proper time to review the ground gone over and "scan the results which have been obtained" under its administration.

In this, I fully agree with the gentleman. In every community there are always found many who watch for and rejoice in all valuable practicable results effected by any department of the Government, for the public weal.

As an individual of the community, who, in times past, has felt some interest in the education of the people, and does his "little best" accordingly, to render the district common schools effective to this end, I have carefully read the report which has now been put forth by the Board of Education. Circumstances considered, it is rather a note-worthy document.

Instead of a live, suggestive, pushing production suited to the demands of the present time, it reads more like a stale, sleepy narrative of the past century, not that we have any special objection to a moderate amount of dreamy self-gratulation, in the effort to put the best side out—albeit the *Ego* may not happen to be to the public, a very remarkable individual, as a practical worker in any department of this world's business—but when one occupying a public post in which brave and efficient workers have toiled before him, and won, too, an honorable fame therein, seeks stealthily to rob them of their fairly earned laurels and to grace his own brow therewith, then, we think the gentleman is putting it on rather thick; and calculating, withal, quite too largely on the average powers of deglutition, to be found in the community. True heroism, let the gentleman bear in mind, in any sphere of labor, disdains the meanness of making for itself a sham greatness, by a stealthy leap upon the shoulders of really great men.

But here is the report, and we cannot help asking, as we finish its perusal, if its author *is*, in very deed, the man whose facile pen, for all those long years, never tired in its weekly denunciations of the common school system which the American Missionaries had instrumentally organized for the Hawaiian people? Can this be he, who persisted in holding up to unmeasured scorn the schools of the land, and in pouring contempt upon the glorious fruits which they had borne for the nation? Is it possible that this is the individual who was so loud and brave in letting the public know what marvellous things *he* could effect for the people, had he the educational apparatus in his hands? Alas, that this tamely apologetic document should have been the *all* that that most self-confident of critics could produce, and that too, after nearly three years of official toil.

But I wish to notice *what the report avers of the present and past condition of our common schools.*

This is on the whole, regarded as satisfactory, when compared with their former state under Mr. Armstrong's administration. "The advance for the three years past *has been commendable; and contrary to assertions publicly made in some quarters, their proficiency will compare favorably with that of any previous year.*" (How much the present Inspector General formerly knew personally of schools—and of their practical working—which he was wont to mention, only with indiscriminate condemnation, we are left to conjecture.) And notwithstanding there are many schools of a very low grade and badly attended, with no interest felt by parents, with few books and no efficient inspection, and with no teaching for eight months of the year, nevertheless "*that the proportion of such is greater than it formerly was, the objectors have failed to prove; while my own yearly visits and examinations fully disprove it.*"

Finally the report sums up in this remarkable language: "*Newspaper talk, Reverend Committees, and clerical opposition, notwithstanding, I* KNOW *that those schools are in a more thriving condition than that in which I found them in 1865.*"

Now, I propose to state a few plain facts, to show what ground the Inspector General has for this conclusion so strangely deduced from the premises which he himself gives us.

That my statements may be positive and proveable, I speak of our own district, which, in its educational conditions, cannot differ essentially from other parts of the Islands.

When he came into office, the gentleman found the schools as efficient, as with the means then or now at command, they could be made. They were supplied with *the best available teachers provided by the higher schools, were under the constant supervision of a district kahu, aided very generally by the Protestant Missionary*, with *faithful examinations quarterly, schooling five hours per day, throughout the year*, with *vacations amounting in the aggregate to 8 or 10 weeks only.*

These underscored statements give us the terms under which the common schools had for years been carried on, and *under which they had bestowed upon the nation an elementary education more nearly universal than is possessed by any nation beside, on the face of the earth.*

Now to turn to the present school laws and the system which they shape, we have *such teachers as it has pleased the Inspector General to select*, for reasons best known to himself and subordinate officers (let reference be made to the schools of Puuepa and Honomakau as well as Niulii) *under the actual supervision of nobody*, with *annual examinations as nearly a farce as may be, schooling four hours per day for two or three days per week, with uninterrupted vacations of every third month*, superadded. Moreover until very recently the two or three days of schooling weekly, *were optional with the teacher, both as to the days themselves and also as to the time of day at which the session was held.* Now add to these most unfavorable conditions, that other fact that the children are, in our rural districts, greatly scattered from sea to inland, and you have the data fairly stated, for an estimate of the gross unreliability of the official statements, to which reference has been made. If these deliverances are not the veriest moonshine, then to speak of means as necessary to an end, is pure nonsense.

This same sort of reasoning which the report offers us and from which it professes to deduce the conclusions stated, would prove, with equal soundness of demonstration, that the schools would go on just as well, may even better, were the office of Inspector General abolished and the last provision for the superintendence of the schools, struck from the statute.

But what the Inspector General declares so emphatically that he "*knows*" to exist, thousands of us are absolutely positive has no existence at all, beyond that gentleman's imagination. And, with what show of reason, we would like to inquire, can he pretend that his acquaintance with the affairs of remote districts, is anything like as particular or reliable, as is that of those who dwell in these districts and are at all times perfectly familiar with their condition and history? Possibly, his understanding of these matters, is even better than that of the local officials themselves. It would certainly seem so.

The local Inspector of this district, informed me that in the first twelve months of the present Inspector General's incumbency, there was a decrease of one hundred pupils in our common schools, i.e., nearly one-fourth of the entire number. Perhaps the gentleman "*knows*" better.

Subsequent also to the last annual examination of the schools, one of the public officers of the district, who by invitation aided the local Inspector therein, declared that he was ashamed to see how miserably low the schools had fallen. He assured me that whole schools were unable to produce six books each, of any kind, and that the examination was in consequence a mere pretence. This testimony accords perfectly with my own personal observation, as well as with that of other intelligent individuals who have interest sufficient in our schools to induce them to ascertain the facts. Will the Inspector General assure us that he "*knows*" better! Quite likely—but *does* he "*know*" better? And if he does, there are not a few who are curious to learn both the source of his superior knowledge and the full extent thereof.

But the gentleman has, after all, a conviction that there is "something rotten in Denmark." He dwells upon the "continued decrease of the population," "the migratory habits of the people," "the enticements of labor which draw all the larger class of boys from the schools," "the springing up of English schools," "poorly qualified teachers," "want of interest on the part of parents," "miserable school houses," too general absence of the pupils from school, "destitution of books," "lack of suitable inspection," "short portion of the year for which the schools can be sustained," and upon other causes which have led to the present condition of public educational interests throughout the Islands, apart from the two or three centres. But these hindrances arrange themselves obviously under two distinct heads, viz: those which the new school laws have created, and for the existence of which the Government is solely responsible; and those which, in part, are inevitable under any ordinary conditions of society, and in part are peculiar to the present conditions of Hawaiian life. Of the former, more in the sequel. Of the latter, all I need to say is that they are not *new* evils, nor have they had any specially injurious influence upon the school interests for the last three years, beyond what has been felt for the entire generation past. We decidedly object, therefore, to any special pleading for a special hearing on their account.

What we greatly want to know is this—taking the data furnished us by the Inspector as corroborative of much more that is notorious—how comes it to pass that when in schools of thirty to forty pupils, there is not an average daily attendance of ten, and these largely taught without books, and for the briefest period each school day, and the school days not amounting, in the aggregate, to more than four months of the year—how comes it to pass, I ask, that under conditions so destructive as these the common schools are now more thrifty than they formerly were, under a vigorous and effective surveillance and kept on full time, too?

Again, we certainly did expect, in view of the wretched condition of the public schools in country districts, and especially in view of the fact that the main causes of educational decay are patent to all eyes, some fitting discussion of the points most detrimental on the practical working, as well as some amendatory suggestions from so skilled an educator as the present Inspector General has so long professed to be. But nothing of the kind refreshes the eye or gratifies the mind or cheers the hope. On the contrary, we find the momentous fact, that the *children of the nation, away from the centres, are left to retrograde towards barbarism*—let coolly alone—while the trivial matters of school house building and local changes of teachers are gravely discoursed of to the waiting public! True, these are not unimportant topics, and none would object to their introduction into a school report, had they been accompanied by any fitting discussion of topics which are strictly vital to the nation's well-being. But to waste time in dealing with school houses and changes of teachers, while the children are left uncared for, to run wild on the sea shore and in our ravines, is worse than absurd.

Besides, if the truth must be told, the Inspector General, in making such statements as he has put forth about school houses and teachers, has calculated quite too liberally upon the forgetfulness or ignorance of his readers. Possibly it was done with a pure dove-like innocency and an unassailable honesty. We can see how this appears upon inspection. E. B.

Kohala, Hawaii.

[To be concluded next week.]

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30 Lines	3 00	6 00	10 00	16 00	18 00	25 00
¼ Column	8 00	12 00	16 00	22 00	35 00	50 00
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